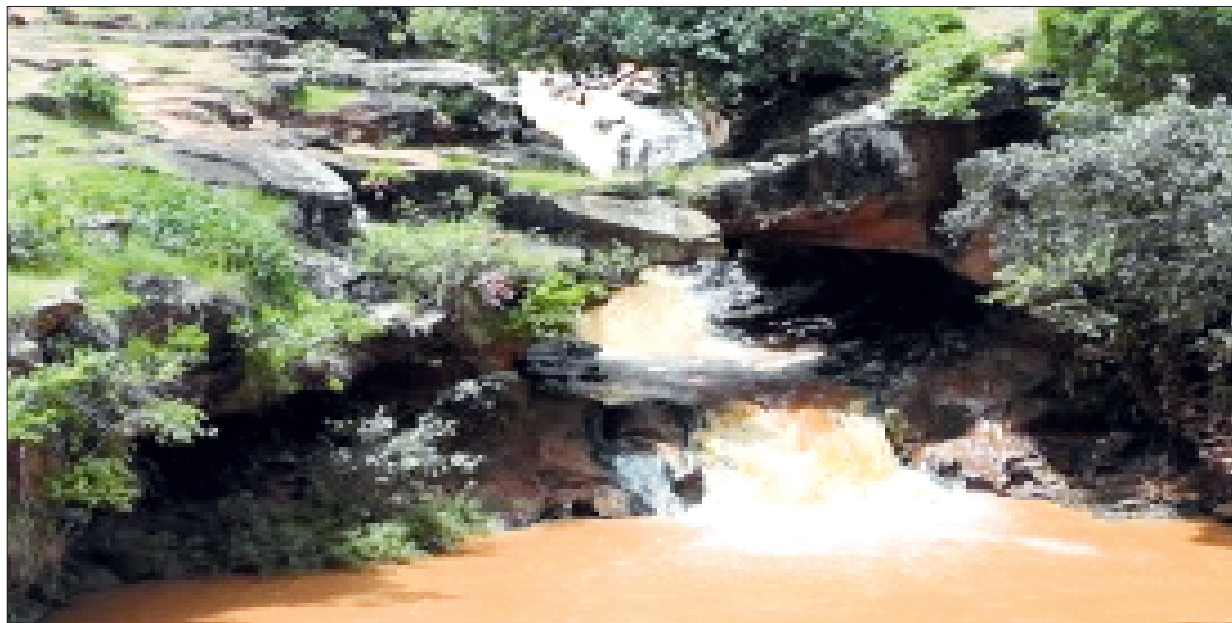


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The untapped tourist attractions in Wolaita Zone

BY ADDISALEM MULAT

No one can deny the fact that Ethiopia is well known for its rich tourism assets given that the country possesses diverse cultural, historical and archaeological attractions with scores of flora as well as fauna. The government of Ethiopia has been working day in and day out with the intention of taking the tourism industry to a new chapter of success. Hence, the number of tourists visiting the country's tourist attractions positioned in different parts of the country is getting bigger every so often. Above and beyond, there are a range of untapped tourist attractions in the left, right and center of the country for the most part in a range of states and zones. Without a shadow of doubt, Wolaita is one of them given that there are quite a lot of untapped tourist attractions which have the power of captivating the hearts and minds of tourists coming from various parts of the world.

In the same way, Wolaita is one of the zones in the Southern nations, nationalities and peoples state comprising twelve Woredas and three reform towns. Soddo is the centre of Wolaita Zone comprising seven outlets through which tourists enters and

exits over and over again. What is more, Soddo is attention-grabbing town surrounded with a range of tourist attractions. The people of Wolaita are hospitable, sociable and kind hearted. They leave no stone unturned to make tourists day no matter what the cost may be. Without any exaggeration, the tourist sites in Wolaita Zone take account of natural and historical attractions. Among the top eighteen tourist attraction sites found in the different parts of the zone, this writer would like to mention some of them as follows:

Ajora waterfalls

Ajora waterfalls are one of the tourist attractions in the zone. They are twin waterfalls bedecked with attention-grabbing panorama from head to foot. They win the hearts and minds of anyone with no trouble. More to the point, the waterfalls leave a long lasting memory within the shortest time possible. It is as well the largest tourist attraction to be found in Wolaita zone, Bolosso Bombe Woreda. The waterfalls are located 56km away from the zonal capital, Soddo and 5km away from the Woreda capital, Bombe. The twin waterfalls/Ajora waterfalls are the outcome of Soke and Ajancho rivers which are alienated by 100 meter gap. The two rivers join

just below the set of magnificent waterfalls to form the Omo River.

Mount Damota

Damota Mountain is one of the most eye-catching tourist attractions positioned in the zone. It is considered as the Water Tower of Wolaita. In actual fact, it is 3000 meter above sea level. The mountain is located in Wolaita Soddo Woreda at a distance of 12-kms away from the Soddo Town. The mountain is the basis of abundant tourist attraction. During rainy season, the mountain is covered with snow in next to no time. While we are on the subject, we can see the nuts and bolts of the entire town from the top of the Mount Damota with no trouble.

Soddo/Wolaita Museum

The Soddo museum is situated in the heart of the Wolaita Zone Culture, Tourism and Government Communication Affairs Department compound. The antiquities of the last king of Wolaita, the cultural and ceremonial dress, objects and artifacts of the king are housed in the museum. Everything considered, the museum consists of noteworthy antiquity and wildlife vestiges in addition to surrounding the nations' household paraphernalia

with their function demonstrated. One can easily understand the culture as well as the history of the nation from the museum within the shortest time possible as the whole thing is readily available there. **Mochena Borago Cave**

This cave is found at the foot of mount Damota. It is placed at a distance of 12km away from Soddo town via Hossana-Addis Ababa. The cave is situated at 2,340 meter above sea level with 33 meters high roof and 50 meters width. Remarkably, the wall of the cave is naturally built with hard rocks. At this moment in time, the place is turning out to be interesting site for American, French and German archeologists. According to archeological findings, human beings were in the cave earlier than 58,000 to 70,000 years.

Natural Bridge and Abala Chokare (Bilbo Hotspiring)

This natural bridge is placed in Wolaita zone. It is a God given gift which is to be found in Offa Woreda. The bridge is positioned at a distance of 5km from the Woreda town, Gesuba and 29km from the zonal administrative town, Soddo. By the way, the bridge is made from a single stone. At this point in time, it is being visited by a number of tourists as

a result of its attention-grabbing nature.

Abala Chokare (Bilbo Hotspiring) spring is located in Humbo Woreda Abela Markea Kebele. It is a circle shaped hot spring which covers broad areas with wonderful outlook. The boiled bubbles which come deep inside the ground win the hearts and minds of every person without doubt. The water vapor can be seen at a distance. More often than not, the hot spring under discussion used for healing illness as well as recreational bathing and thus most people take pleasure in the hot spring.

Carbon project

This project is the first huge Africa's forestry situated in Humbo Woreda. It is known as Africa's first full-size forestry project located at a distance of 20km from Wolaita Soddo. The project covers an area of 2,800 hectares of degraded land. The intended target of the project is to restore degraded natural forest. This being the case, the local people have established seven forests cooperative associations in conjunction with the legal ownership of community land with the intention of rehabilitating besmirched forest areas, augmenting rejuvenation, reducing carbon emissions in addition to increasing carbon sequestration by closing degraded forest area.



SHARE Bale Eco-region Project - from where to where?

Part V

Introduce improved forage and breed

The introduction of improved forage as well as improved breed through artificial insemination and introduction of local breeds like the Borena ones is improving livestock productivity. And the project is also supporting the livestock health services through training community animal health workers and providing veterinary kits. Almost all of the trainings have been providing remarkable support to the health services. Obviously, pastorals are mobile, while the government health posts are found in a particular village. Hence, their heads of cattle move along the mobile community making the provision of the veterinary service impossible.

Access to water

The fourth one is access to water. In relation to accessibility of water, the project is developing water ponds so that livestock as well as people there can have water close by.



Before project intervention, the pastoral communities used to trek for about eight hours in search of water. These days, such a cumbersome task is no more. They have got water to that intend locality. Most children deprived of the chance to attend school accompanying mothers or family members to

fetch water, and did not have settled life.

Access to market

And the final package under livestock productivity improvement is access to market. The project has also tried to construct a secondary livestock market center which includes all the facilities, such as, the veterinary

clinic, tax office, detention pain, loading tramp and other facilities that attract whole sealer and abattoirs to that specific locality. This livestock market center can serve for the pastoral community that inhabited in the five woredas of Bale.

Family planning

The other important activity under livelihood improvement is the integration of family planning to all intervention of Share Bale Eco-region project. Obviously, there are social cultural and religious challenges against the use of contraceptives in the area. Bale is very well known for high population due to high fertility rate; which is average family size of more than 6.3 persons. The figure is the highest in the Oromia state. So, unless working through integrating family planning aspect in the Bale Eco region, the project could not manage to ensure a sustainable development and conservation of natural resources. With this regard, the project has used the government's structure such as the health office at zonal, woreda and kebele

levels by taking on board health extension workers.

As a strategy to address the issue of family planning, the project used as an entry point the village health committee at kebele level. In line with this, the project offer training for members of the committee to build their skill on how to deliver the service and make them more responsible on serving their community. The committee in turn conducts awareness raising training every two weeks in their respective locality. Hence, the project has brought attitudinal change in terms of using family planning services such as short and long term contraceptives. Currently, the attitudinal change improvement in terms of family planning is observed in the area. In this regard, the project is credited for ensuring a change for contraceptive prevalence rate by 12 per cent. The project has a baseline value while intervening in the area, based on the study result the contraceptive prevalence rate was about 24 per cent and now it has come close to 36 per cent.